

REMARKS

Claims 2-4, 6, 8, 10-15 and 18-20 are pending in the present application. In view of the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Kim et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,352,454, hereinafter "Kim"). In addition, claims 11-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kim. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Claim 6, as originally filed, has been amended to be placed in independent form. As a result, claims 1 and 5 have been canceled herein. It is respectfully submitted that Kim does not teach or suggest the limitations of claim 6. In particular, claim 6, as originally filed, recites "an adhesive layer of titanium arranged beneath the titanium nitride layer so that the adhesive layer is between the surface of the contact tip and the titanium nitride layer."

The Office Action states that "Kim et al disclose (fig 3) the probe needle further comprising an adhesive layer (there is a bonding material between the TiN layer and the probe body) of titanium arranged beneath the titanium nitride layer (178) so that the adhesive layer is between the surface of the contact tip and the titanium nitride layer (178)." Study of the reference, however, provides no teaching whatsoever of this "bonding material" much less the specific titanium layer required by the claim.

The lone reference to the Kim patent itself is to Figure 3. This figure clearly does not show any bonding material between the wear resistant material 178 and the free portion 162 of the spring contact. In fact, an electronic word search of the Kim patent finds no reference to any titanium layers, much less a titanium layer between the surface of the contact tip and a titanium nitride layer. Since the reference does not teach one of the claim limitations, it cannot anticipate

the claim. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 6 is allowable over the references of record.

Claims 2-4 depend from claim 6 and add further limitations. It is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are allowable by reason of depending from an allowable claim as well as for adding new limitations.

Claim 10, as originally filed, has been amended to be placed in independent form. As a result, claims 7 and 9 have been canceled. Claim 10, as originally filed, specifically recites "coating at least in the area of the contact tip with a titanium layer prior to the coating with titanium nitride." The Kim reference does not teach or suggest coating any area of the contact tip with a titanium layer prior to coating with titanium nitride. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 10 is allowable over the references of record.

Claims 8 and 11-15 depend from claim 10 and add further limitations. It is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are allowable by reason of depending from an allowable claim as well as for adding new limitations.

Claim 18, as originally filed, has been amended to be placed in independent form. As a result, claims 16-17 have been canceled. Claim 18, as originally filed, specifically recites contacting a test probe to at least one contact pad, wherein the test probe includes "a contact tip that is coated with a layer of titanium and a layer of titanium nitride overlying the layer of titanium." The reference by Kim does not teach or suggest a contact tip that is coated with a layer of titanium and a layer of titanium nitride and, therefore, cannot anticipate claim 18. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 18 is allowable over the references of record.

Claims 19 and 20 depend from claim 18 and add further limitations. It is respectfully submitted that these dependent claims are allowable by reason of depending from an allowable claim as well as for adding new limitations.

Applicant has made a diligent effort to place the claims in condition for allowance. However, should there remain unresolved issues that require adverse action, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone Ira S. Matsil, Applicant's attorney, at 972-732-1001 so that such issues may be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Respectfully submitted,



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